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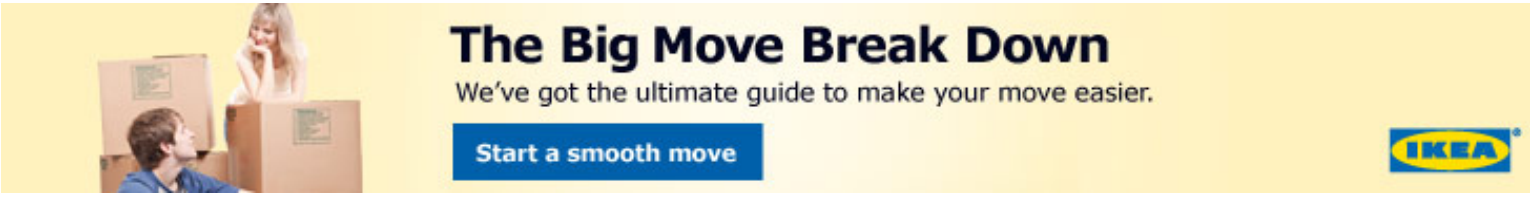

Matt Hale's mother talks about her son's imprisonment

Despite heart problems that required Evelyn Hutcheson to have a pacemaker, she said she walks on the treadmill every day.

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Her son is former East Peorian and white supremacist Matt Hale.

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Jeanette Kendall/TimesNewspapers |

Evelyn Hutcheson hold a photograph of her son Matt Hale who is incarcerated in a maximum security prison in Colorado. Hutcheson said her son is innocent.

By Jeanette Kendall
TimesNewspapers
Posted Feb. 18, 2014 @ 12:01 am

Despite heart problems that required Evelyn Hutcheson to have a pacemaker, she said she walks on the treadmill every day. "I want to stay alive and help my son," said the 75-year-old Washington woman. Her son is former East Peorian and white supremacist Matt Hale. Hale, 42, is serving a 40-year federal prison sentence after being sentenced in 2005 of soliciting a member of

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his church, who was really an FBI informant, to kill federal Judge Joan Lefkow who ruled in a trademark infringement case involving Hale's church. Hale was arrested in 2003 and after 10 years in prison, Hale maintains his innocence. He recently filed a lawsuit against the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Randall Samborn, press spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago, said, "I can tell you right now that my office declines comment on Hale's lawsuit against the Bureau of Prisons." Hale gained notoriety in the early 1990s with the founding of his church, now called The Creativity Movement. Hale, an ordained minister, served as the Pontifex Maximus, or highest priest, of the church. The church preaches that the white race is superior to other races. In a press release dated Feb. 11 prepared by Hutcheson, it states that Hale is seeking $19 million in damages in the lawsuit. "With this lawsuit, I am on the attack from now on," Hale said in the release prepared by his mom. "I seek to stop the federal government from ever again imposing bans upon my mail as well as clear the way for the resumption of my leadership of and participation in our great church and cause." With his appeals exhausted, Hale has filed a civil lawsuit against the Federal Bureau of Prisons. He claims the bureau has violated his constitutional rights. The 30-page complaint states that the wardens and other prison officials put a ban on Hale's mail, keeping him from participating in his church and religion. Hale is serving his time in solitary confinement at a maximum security prison in Colorado. He has 24 years left of his sentence; however, Hutcheson does not think her son should be in prison at all. In the past 10 years, Hutcheson said she has seen her son once through the glass. Hale's father, Russell, died last year. He visited his son once in prison, Hutcheson said. Hutcheson corresponds with her son through letters and two phone calls a month. She worries that after she is gone, there will be no one to help her son. "The corrupt justice system destroyed his father," Hutcheson said, later adding, "You can tell I'm bitter and I am. I used to have faith in the justice system but I no longer do. I cry almost every day. I'm powerless but I still believe that people have a right to their own religion and freedom of speech." Hutcheson said she is a very outspoken person and that if she thought her son was guilty, she would feel differently. "Inside he's a gentle, loving person," Hutcheson said about her son. "I'd like people to know what's going on — that he would have somebody commit murder — that's so unlike him." Hutcheson, who said she is an atheist and does not believe in everything her son's church preaches, explained more about The Creativity Movement. "Matt is pro white. His church believes in preserving the white race. They also believe in pure … like food. He's a raw foodist. Even though the law says the prison should give him his religion diet, they aren't," Hutcheson said. Hutcheson said that as a raw foodist, Hale ate raw fruits, nuts, vegetables and berries before he was incarcerated. "And he's been forced for 10 years — if he wants to live — to eat their regular diet," she said. In the news release, Hale said of his lawsuit: "There is no legitimate reason why I should not be allowed to be just as active for our white race from within these walls as I was when I was a free man and I intend to vindicate that

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right fully. Rumors of my demise as a societal force to be reckoned with were entirely premature!" Hutcheson also explained that her son doesn't fit the labels that have been put on him. "He doesn't want to be called a racist because he has a different idea of what a racist is, but he is pro white, which means he wants to be separate. He wants to preserve the white race. That's the way I see it." Hutcheson said her son does not hate and does not like being hated. "My opinion is there was a lot of hate in that courtroom," she said. The church member Hale is accused of soliciting was an informant for the FBI. "During the time he was arrested, he asked for a polygraph and he was ignored. He has asked repeatedly through the years, 'Give me a polygraph.' So now he sent a letter to (Assistant U.S. Attorney David) Bindi, requesting a polygraph and Bindi refused," Hutcheson said. Hutcheson said her son was wrongfully accused and a number of factors played into the sentencing. "The judge decided to use federal guidelines saying he's a terrorist," she said. Hutcheson said other factors such as the actions of a former member of Hale's church, an incompetent lawyer and a biased jury did not give her son a fair trial. Clifford Barnard, an attorney in Colorado who represented Hale for five years during the appeals process, said he does not think Hale received a fair trial. He said one of the appeals was called a 2255, a collateral attack that the underlying conviction was unconstitutional. "That was the whole thrust and purpose of the 2255. That was based on things that his attorney did or didn't do (during the trial)," Barnard said. "Unfortunately, the judge who presided over the matter didn't agree. ... I'm not the judge so I don't get the final say." One of the parts of Hale's trial that Hutcheson said she did not think was fair was allowing aspects of a crime committed by Benjamin Smith. Smith was a member of Hale's church, but Hutcheson said Smith was no longer a member, when in 1999, he went on a shooting spree of non-whites in Illinois and Indiana. Smith killed two and wounded nine people before he shot himself. One of the men Smith shot to death was Ricky Byrdsong, a former basketball coach at Northwestern University. "The judge allowed Ben Smith's crimes into Matt's trial, which I do not believe should have been allowed," Hutcheson said, adding that the jury foreman during her son's trial worked at the same university where Byrdsong was a coach. Another incident in early 2005 involving the death of Lefkow's mother and husband, who were shot to death by a disgruntled man named Bart Ross, played into Hale's trial, Hutcheson said. Ross killed himself and a suicide note was found in which he admitted to the murders. Lefkow dismissed a medical malpractice suit involving Ross, Hutcheson said. "I think because of that being just before (Matt's) sentencing that the judge decided to sentence him as a terrorist," Hutcheson said. "They wanted to blame Matt for that even though he was incarcerated. The FBI came to my house and tried to get me to say that Matt had sent me a coded message to have one of his followers go do this crime." Despite being in solitary confinement for 10 years, Hutcheson said her son is not broken. "He will never give up and I'm extremely proud of him," she said. In his cell, he reads books about philosophy and plays music in his head. Hale's violin sits in its case on top of

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his mother's hutch because he is not allowed to have it in prison. A framed photo of Hale sits on a shelf of the same hutch. "It breaks my heart. I try not to look at it," Hutcheson said of the photo. If Hale serves all of his sentence, he would be about 65 when he gets out of prison. "I'll be long dead," Hutcheson said. "Such a tragedy."

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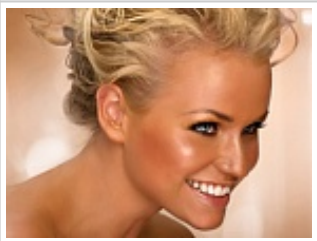

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